

Sen. Dodd Finds Himself in the Middle

Spectre of the Left Is a Critic of the Right

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By TOM KELLY

FOR some time now a spectre has been haunting some members of the liberal left—the spectre of Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D., Conn.).

He is, chatty girls at many a cocktail party will tell you, easily identifiable as the visible spirit of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R., Wis.).

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SEN. THOMAS J. DODD

100 per cent last year and 80 per cent this. He is, and has been, a supporter of all the recognized liberal causes, such as public housing and aid to the aged.

He has denounced the John Birch Society on the Senate floor as "an affront to decency and intelligence." Last summer he told an American Legion group of all people, that the wild and woolly right-wingers who often call themselves 100 per cent Americans are, in fact, "grotesque caricatures, symbols of everything that is essentially un-American. They proceed on the basis that a man is guilty until proved innocent, that the Constitutional rights of suspected persons should be abrogated, that foreigners, foreign goods and foreign ideas should be excluded from America."

In Dallas, Tex., of all places, he told his audience that one of the conspicuous blot on the American scene is "the tragedy of racial discrimination. . . . The American Negro finds in his path obstacles placed in his path everywhere he turns. . . . discrimination in essential aspects of social life. . . . discrimination in education. . . . discrimination in housing. . . .

discrimination in employment. (It) is the ultimate denial of our professions of liberty and human dignity."

He says he did and does consider the late Sen. McCarthy "a reckless and irresponsible man."

Differences

MANY an honest liberal can find points of disagreement with some of Sen. Dodd's conclusions as to the best way to handle specific problems arising out of our conflicts with Russia.

His position that Cheddi Jagan, Prime Minister of British Guiana—who is admittedly a Marxist—should be denied all U. S. aid is one open to debate since Mr. Jagan claims to be permanently wedded to free, democratic elections and a free press.

Before we give him any money, Mr. Jagan "should demonstrate" that he is as democratic as he claims, Sen. Dodd says.

"I would never foreclose the possibility that a man can change but on the record (he is) . . . violently anti-American and positively pro-communist."

On occasion Sen. Dodd, however, has expressed admiration for a good many socialists.

He told the Anti-Communist Crusade in the Hollywood Bowl that it "was a tough old European social democrat, Vaino Tanner, who saved Finland from communism. . . . while the Finnish Agrarian Party, which was supposed to be more conservative, collaborated with the communists."

He then listed five other "socialist statesmen" in four European countries who had "played outstanding roles in resisting communism."

He praised the American AFL-CIO unions as having "more solid understanding on the subject of communism. . . . than any other major sector of our society."

He thinks the dangers of communist infiltration and subversion are obvious but he does not see communists behind every curtain: Communist infiltration in government may at no time constitute more than a tiny fraction of 1 per cent of all Government employes and officials. . . . It will never be able to take over the American Government from within as some exaggerated fears have had it."

It is difficult from the published transcripts of his hearings to find basis from the belief that he is abusive to witnesses, including those who plead the Fifth Amendment. The transcripts are, on the other hand, fairly well speckled with witnesses who are determinedly dilatory.

As He Sees It

THE Senator himself conceives his role as one of rallying liberals and conservatives of good will against communism and in ousting the nuts at both extremes.

"I am particularly worried by the growing bitterness between our liberals and our conservatives. In speaking about liberals, I do not mean the totalitarian sympathizers of the Soviet Union who disguise themselves as liberals and in speaking about conservatives I do not mean those who have so completely abdicated their belief in freedom that they still regret the defeat of Nazism. I refer to the great mass of decent Americans whose adherence to these respective philosophies of government falls within the framework of the American political tradition."

He does not think that the voice of Dodd is the voice of God.

"I am," he said, "doing the best I can."

There seems no better basis to think his voice is the voice of McCarthy.